

a community called ...

The Copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy of reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

© Asbury Theological Seminary 2011



TO-DAY! TO-DAY!

A TRUE STORY.

“WELL, you speak the truth, and at a future time I do intend to be religious; but I must have some more *sprees* yet. I must enjoy life awhile longer still.” So said the youthful, gay, and healthy R. in reply to some serious expostulations which I had been addressing to him.

I had spoken to him of the claims of the Creator upon the creatures of his hand; of violations of the law met by the shedding of the Redeemer's blood; of peace with God which faith in him secures; of freedom from uneasy, anxious cares, and tormenting, terrifying fears;

and of the genuine pleasantness of wisdom's ways. He owned that what had been urged was true; yet still he smiled and joked, and bade the peaceful message go its way. One concluding word of his, however, fell solemnly on my ear, and deeply affected my spirit. He exclaimed, while turning on his heel to leave me, "But I shall perhaps rue of this." My hurried answer, so far as I remember, was, "Perhaps you will." That day was Friday.

I saw him again the next morning. We paced together one of the public walks outside the city. I dealt with him earnestly. My sympathies were awakened for him, and I used every argument, and put before him every moving consideration that was within my power at the time; yet once more he answered me that at a later period of his life he would attend to these concerns, but that he still meant to "have some more *spree* yet."

That day passed over, a second day followed, a third succeeded, and then suddenly the startling question was asked me, "Have you heard how poor R. is to-day?" All that had re-

scently passed between us now rushed upon my mind, and I said with much emotion, "No, indeed; what is the matter with him? I have not heard that any thing has befallen him." "Have you not?" replied the inquirer; "ah, he is all but dead of the small-pox." I sent to know the worst. Alas! it was even so. That very day—but three or four days after he had declared that "at some future time he did intend to seek the Lord, but that he must enjoy *life* for some longer season, and have some more *sprees* yet"—that previously healthy, gay, and thoughtless youth suddenly expired.

On the previous Friday he joked and put off serious thought, and purposed future years of jollity and gayety. On the following morning, during the conversation already mentioned, he had informed me of his having experienced during the previous night some symptoms of indisposition. He had even told me that he had had passing suspicion of being threatened with an attack of the small-pox. He was better, however, he said, having used some active remedy; so that not the slightest

apprehension had passed through my mind at the time of his being in any real danger from that most dangerous disease. I treated him as one in undoubted and vigorous health, and I pressed upon him rather the importance of a well-spent life than that of being prepared for an early death.

But ere yet another week had fled, the disfigured, lifeless corpse of poor R. had been committed "earth to earth, and dust to dust."

The funeral knell that pealed forth over the remains of poor R. still speaks. It cries to all such as have ears to hear, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." TO-DAY! TO-DAY! "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Reader, I would speak to *you also* of the claims of your Creator; of the claims of the Redeemer; of peace with God through him; of a happy, holy life, and of a glorious consummation in the presence of the blessed Saviour at his appearing.

All else is vanity. The pleasures and pur

suits of time and sense are transient and delusive. No one knows what true *life* is until he lives to God. They who suppose that those only enjoy life who live in the lusts and enjoyments of the world are grievously mistaken. Those who fancy that the commencement of a life of faith is the conclusion of one's days of happiness are thoroughly deceived. The exact opposite is the truth. There is no true joy, no real pleasure, no substantial happiness, apart from Jesus Christ, away from God. But to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as my own Saviour, and to know the pardon of sin through his blood, is indeed peace; it is indeed delight. To know God as my Father, my Friend, my Guide, my Helper, MY GOD—this is indeed to live. Life begins only when faith first works by love. When first the heart of a poor, wretched sinner, be he young or old, rich or poor, well or ill, lays hold by faith on the holy, crucified, and risen Saviour, and thus enters into rest and certainty and eternal life, then for the first time does he begin to “enjoy life.” There is no rest of con-

science, no ease of heart, no peace to the wicked.

Dear reader, God now puts in a claim to you through Jesus Christ. He claims that you, with hearty self-renunciation, and with penitent admission of your lost estate, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; that you do receive his only-begotten and well-beloved Son as your Saviour and your Lord, your righteousness and your life, your "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." With him all is yours; without him nothing is yours but sin and death and hell.

Receive him, and your sin is pardoned, your transgression is forgiven, your dread iniquity is covered. Receive him in the full confidence of your heart, and God himself will become *your* God, *your* Father; and you shall become an heir of glory, an inheritor of immortality and everlasting joys.

This *is life indeed*. All else that is great and good will surely result therefrom. All that is wise and noble, whatsoever things are "pure and lovely and of good report," will

assuredly be found only here. Knowing the love of God to you, you will love him in return. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Thus will you live in the very element of true delight. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment." Here, then, is true joy, true happiness. Reader, is it not so? O yes; you own it. Alas! so did poor R. He owned that I had spoken the words of truth and soberness. But then, O reader! you perhaps are even now saying in your heart, as he said with the lip that at some future time—some undefined, undetermined, and utterly uncertain day—you too will turn to God, will flee to Christ.

Dear reader, do not tempt God. TO-DAY! TO-DAY! Judge me not severely. What if *to-night* you should be attacked by some fierce and fatal malady? Do not flatter yourself that there is no danger. How know you that? What fatal malaria may not the next breath you draw convey into the most easily affected organs of your system? Thousands as strong

as you in the morning have been laid low, are daily being laid low, before the eventide. What, indeed, is man's life? A frail and fickle thing. A vapor, a shadow, a bubble, a dream, the flower of grass.

I add one further word. All that I can learn of his behavior or conversation during his brief illness was this, that on one occasion, very shortly before his death, he had requested to be allowed to leave his bed in order to kneel down to pray. All else is sealed until the dreadful day that shall clear up all uncertainties.

Once more, dear reader, I cry to you, TO-DAY! TO-DAY! O to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as they did respecting whom, of old, God "swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest."



HUNT & EATON, Fifth Ave. and Twentieth St., New York.
CRANSTON & STOWE, Cincinnati.